

School IPM Outreach and Research Activities, NYS IPM Program, 2007

Project Leaders: Lynn Braband, Jody Gangloff-Kaufmann

Cooperators: Jennifer Grant, NYS IPM Program. Amy Ivy, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Clinton County. Nancy Welch, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Hamilton County. Emily Selleck, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Essex County. Holly Wise, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County. Julie Seghrouchni, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County. Jeff Sisson, Champlain Valley Educational Services. Christine Weeks, Franklin-Essex-Hamilton BOCES. Julie Shoemaker, Patty Cerio, Jefferson-Lewis BOCES. Maureen O'Neill, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency. John Bennett, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Kathy Murray, Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources. Pat Cozzarin, Cozzarin Pest Management.

Locations: Albany, Franklin, Hamilton, Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester Counties and New York City

Abstract: Integrated pest management in schools is needed to reduce risks to children and others from both pests and the overuse of pesticides. The NYS IPM Program was involved in several outreach activities at schools in 2007. We organized school IPM outreach workshops for rural Adirondack school districts, an underserved audience. We worked on bedbug outreach within the New York City educational environment. The NYS IPM Program initiated contacts with the state's non-public schools and interacted with the US EPA concerning asthma connections with school building conditions. We participated in a nation-wide group preparing a USDA-funded Pest Management Strategic Plan for school IPM and were involved in plans to implement the Plan's recommendations. NYS IPM Program staff organized a meeting of the Statewide School IPM Committee and interacted with numerous school districts and others about school IPM via presentations and site visits.

Background and Justification: Pest management in schools has received increased attention in New York State and nation-wide. This is due to the critical need to decrease pesticide use to protect our children, who, by nature of their size and developmental stage, are at greater risk than adults. Yet, at the same time, we cannot compromise the quality of pest control because pests represent an equally important health hazard. Schools are especially challenging to manage because they include such varied settings as classrooms, cafeterias, laboratories, auditoriums, theaters, playing fields, playgrounds, and gardens. These areas are heavily used for a variety of purposes, including after-hours public meetings. Visitors, staff, and students are frequently in direct contact with the lawns, athletic fields, flowers, trees, playgrounds, and buildings on the school grounds. Recent passage of a New York State (NYS) pesticide notification law has resulted in additional pressure on schools to reduce pesticide use.

Adirondack School IPM Outreach: NYS IPM Program staff worked with northern New York Cornell Cooperative Extension and Board of Cooperative Education Services partners to organize school IPM outreach workshops for rural Adirondack school districts, an underserved audience. The workshops were held in Piseco (Hamilton County) on October 18, 2007 and Saranac Lake (Franklin County) on October 19, 2007.

The main themes of the workshops were developing and improving IPM policies, notification management, and use of products exempt from notification. In addition to leadership team members, participants were from 15 school districts, a pest control company, and a college. In the workshop evaluations, the participants indicated that their knowledge of pest management improved (most “greatly”) and that they particularly liked the highly interactive nature of the workshops. Participants listed 12 different IPM-related practices that they planned to implement. The most frequently mentioned was the desire to develop or modify written IPM policies and plans.

New York City Outreach: In January of 2007, NYS IPM had the opportunity to evaluate a child development and education center located in Queens, NY, for the potential for bed bug infestation. The effort was significant because this learning center is located in the heart of a heavily infested section of New York City. The Director of this center had taken a pro-active approach, by evaluating the facility for the potential for bed bugs before the center ever opened its doors to children. The evaluation included recommendations for bed bug proofing of shelves and cubbies, monitoring for bed bug introductions on a daily basis, practices to lower the risk of bed bugs entering classrooms, cleaning, and bed bug management in case of an introduction. The Director requested a pre-evaluation to put protocols in place that would protect the school, students, and staff from acquiring bed bugs. A list of recommendations was developed for the center based on a thorough inspection of the facility.

Alarmed about the appearance of bed bugs in as many as 50 schools in New York City, the United Federation of Teachers requested a presentation about bed bugs for a meeting of teachers and union representatives in May 2007. This presentation covered bed bug biology, identification, risks, and risk management from a classroom perspective. There were many individuals in the audience who had faced bed bug problems at home. The presentation was over one hour long and there were 75 attendees.

Non-public Schools Outreach: A significant proportion of New York State’s elementary and secondary school-age children is educated in the state’s parochial and other non-public schools. The NYS IPM Program sought to expand our outreach to this important educational sector by having a display at the annual Conference for Administrators of Independent and Religious Schools, October 15, 2007 in Albany. Additionally, NYS IPM Program staff made a presentation to the conference organizers’ advisory council on the services we can provide. In 2008, we plan to build upon these contacts to develop programming for non-public schools.

US EPA Collaboration: NYS IPM Program staff interacted with EPA (Region 2) concerning asthma connections with school building conditions. EPA scientists are seeking to pinpoint regions in the state that have high asthma hospitalization rates among children and possible contributing factors in schools. In one or more of these areas, partnerships, including the NYS IPM Program, will be developed for effective outreach.

School IPM Pest Management Strategic Plan: In 2006, NYS IPM Program staff participated in a by-invitation-only meeting to develop a national Pest Management Strategic Plan (PMSP) for school IPM. This USDA-funded effort is drawing on school and pest management expertise from across the nation and will serve as a guiding framework for the implementation of IPM in all of the nation’s schools by 2015. Work continued on the PMSP via monthly conference calls and individual assignments

through 2007. Late in 2007 or early in 2008, the document will be distributed to outside reviewers and then published.

To facilitate the implementation of the PMSP's goals, a national school IPM working group and affiliated regional working groups are being organized. NYS IPM Program staff will be active members of the national group and are key organizers of the regional working group in the northeastern United States.

General Outreach: The NYS IPM Program organized a Statewide School IPM Committee in 2002. In October 2007, we held a sixth meeting of the committee. In addition to the diverse membership updating each other on their school IPM activities, Maureen O'Neill, Senior Policy Advisor with the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, described EPA's resources for schools. A letter from Michael Siciliano, New York City Department of Education, concerning IPM in the City's schools was read. The Committee also discussed outreach to non-public schools and connections between IPM and "green cleaning".

In February, 2007, the Long Island Neighborhood Network hosted its annual Organic Turf Trade Show in Huntington, NY. NYS IPM was asked to make a presentation on school structural IPM for school facilities staff in attendance. The talk was titled "Non-Toxic Pest Management Strategies for Buildings" and covered a wide array of indoor pests. The presentation lasted 45 minutes and was given to an audience of about 50 people.

In November the NYS IPM Program received a call from a Long Island school district about a persistent and widespread cockroach problem in a school building. NYS IPM staff met with the facilities director, head custodian, and the pest control vendor to conduct a thorough inspection and develop guidelines for management. Several issues were uncovered during the inspection. Some sanitation problems in the kitchen area and the faculty lounge were likely providing food sources for cockroaches. In the cafeteria, a deteriorating wall and a section of lockers in the wall were providing harborage for the cockroaches close to sources of food and water. There were also concerns with the management efforts of the vendor. Recommendations were made to clean, fix the wall and remove lockers, as well as to switch to a professional bait product and boric acid dust, where appropriate. The school facility director planned to keep in touch with NYS IPM for other pest control issues.

Together with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County, NYS IPM Program staff worked with the Seaford school district to upgrade pest management in the district's buildings and grounds. We recommended to the IPM Institute that Seaford be awarded the Institute's STAR School IPM certification. If successful, Seaford will join a select group (around 30 nationwide, 4 in New York State) of schools and daycares that have been recognized for achieving this high-level of IPM implementation.

Upon request, NYS IPM Program staff visited a Westchester County school district to evaluate the district's pest management program. Recommendations were made concerning record keeping, decision protocols, and woodchuck control.

Throughout 2007, NYS IPM Program staff made presentations on school IPM related topics. Audiences included landscapers, school facilities staff, pest control operators, teachers, librarians, and extension educators.

In September 2003, we initiated IPM curricula development projects. During 2007, these efforts continued and are described in a separate report. Also described in a separate report (“Teaching IPM: from Field to Classroom”), a Park Foundation-funded project engaged teachers, students, and facilities staff in practicing safe and effective pest management.